

Today, U.S. Representative Mike Quigley (IL-05) spoke with CLTV about the Supreme Court's health care ruling.

Reporter: Now from Washington DC by phone, Chicago area Congressman Mike Quigley, a Democrat representing the 5th district of Chicago and suburbs spanning out towards the west. Congressman Quigley, obviously a good day for Democrats, after the Democratic majority was able to push through health care reform a couple of years ago, and withstood a challenge all the way up to the US Supreme Court. But still, you have a lot of people that are still not happy with the law of the land as it stands, and with this being an election year, Republicans are going to be chomping at the bit to try to get a change.

Rep. Mike Quigley: Thanks for having me. And I would say, it's a good day, not just for Democrats, it's a good day for seniors who are no longer going to have to choose between paying the rent or buying their prescription. And college students recently graduated are no longer going to lose their insurance on graduation day.

Reporter: Because they can stay under their parents' policy until age 26, a lot of the points we've been making during this coverage are that there are a lot of aspects of this law that people would applaud on both sides of the political aisle. And as you point out the younger people staying on their parents' policy until age 26, seniors getting those important discounts when you're on a fixed income for prescriptions, and also being able to get that preventative care in many cases. But, moving forward, Republicans still have a gripe. One could argue it's election year stuff, but some really do believe that the costs are going to be too prohibitive and fall on the backs of tax payers in a way that's just not fair.

MQ: The fact is that health insurance is rising dramatically, it has been rising for the last 20 years dramatically, we have to address that issue.

Reporter: When you say health insurance is rising you mean the cost of?

MQ: Health insurance costs have been rising for our life time, very dramatically, and that's what we're going to have to address. The Republicans have shown no willingness to find an alternative to do this. Let's remember that the number one cause of bankruptcy in the United States is catastrophic health incidents that take place to a family. There is no alternative, there is no sympathy toward that end. When I go through my district, one out of ten people are unemployed. Two out of ten don't have health care. For many of those people, lack of health care benefits is more important to them because of the fear they have. They have an asthmatic child, one of the providers is without health care benefits and facing a catastrophic illness. That is extraordinarily important. To say that this is an additional burden, the burden is there, we're just trying to meet this cost.

Reporter: Well what about making it affordable, as you point out, and we've been discussing that this hour as well with numerous people, that I guess the idea with health care is that costs will come down for insurance policies where people find it impossible to buy an insurance policy if you're not under some kind of employer group coverage because it's so prohibitive, so expensive to get your own policy. Now, under this individual mandate, there are going to be these exchanges to help you purchase a policy, supposedly with a subsidy and what not. Is the thinking that it's supposed to be supply and demand where people are forced to now get insurance under the law, now more of a demand will create more of a supply of insurance and that will drive the cost down overall?

MQ: Well it will help individual people who would otherwise have to fend for themselves to try to find a policy that will cover them, it will actually help them to reduce their costs. There's still so much more to be done in that, but we have to hold insurance companies accountable in these rate increases and ensure that their premiums are based on care and not the overhead cost

Reporter: So, so far you're saying the law doesn't really address that

MQ: No, because, first of all, it got us 90% of the way there. Everybody recognized that there was still more to be done. On an ongoing basis the costs were rising and the bill's intention was to try to address the procedure that you just talked about. But we still have to start paying providers for keeping people healthy rather than the number of tests they've run. So much more that needs to be done, no one anticipates the bill would be able to accomplish all those things at once, but let's try to remember, Presidents have been dealing with the cost of health insurance for all Americans since President Roosevelt, Teddy Roosevelt. The Republican response to this

has been to complain and to criticize, but there has been no viable alternative that they have presented. I hope that they present something that's productive about how to meet the requirements of the poorest Americans

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